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Agency

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Environmental NEWS RELEASE



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EPA REGION 5 RELEASES FIRST AIR MONITORING DATA FROM ST. JOSAPHAT SCHOOL IN CHICAGO

(Chicago – Oct. 29, 2009) U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 5 announced today the first set of air toxics monitoring data from St. Josaphat School, 2245 N. Southport, Chicago, has been posted on the agency's Web site.

The Schools Air Toxics Monitoring Initiative, which is monitoring 63 schools in 22 states, is designed to help EPA and state environmental agencies understand whether long-term exposure to toxics in the outdoor air poses health concerns for children and staff at the schools, as well as residents in the surrounding community.

The data is posted at <http://www.epa.gov/schoolair/schools.html>.

Based on the best available information about emissions and sources of pollution in the area, the pollutants most likely to be of concern at St. Josaphat are hexavalent chromium, lead and manganese.

Region 5 is currently monitoring air at 15 schools in the region that were selected as part of the initiative. The first results show that levels of the key hazardous air pollutants at St. Josaphat are below levels of short-term concern. EPA scientists warn against drawing conclusions at this point as the study is designed to determine whether long-term, not short-term, exposure poses health concerns for residents of the community, school children and staff. Once monitoring is complete, the full set of results from all of the schools will be analyzed to evaluate the potential for health concerns related to long-term exposure to these pollutants. EPA will post this analysis to the Web once it is complete.

Outdoor air at each of the schools will be monitored for 60 days, and air-quality monitors will take a minimum of 10 daily samples during the sampling period. EPA will use the information gathered in the initiative to help determine next steps, which could include additional monitoring or enforcement action where appropriate.

Other schools being monitored in EPA Region 5 are Pittsboro Elementary, Pittsboro, Ind., Lincoln Elementary, Warsaw, Ind., Abraham Lincoln Elementary, East Chicago, Ind., Jefferson Elementary, Gary, Ind., Lincoln Park Elementary School, Muskegon, Mich.; Spain Elementary School, Detroit, Mich.; Whitwell Elementary School, Ironton, Mich.; Minnesota International Middle Charter School, Minneapolis, Minn.; Elm Street Elementary School, Wauseon, Ohio; LaCroft Elementary School, East Liverpool, Ohio; Life Skills of Trumbull County and the Academy of Arts and Humanities, Warren, Ohio; The Ohio Valley Educational Service Center and Warren Elementary School, Marietta, Ohio.

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